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BRIEFER COMMUNICATIONS.

THE HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Education for all is recognized as a fundamental principle in the political and social fabric of American institutions. Less can be said of the quality than of the quantity of education given by our public schools. Education is yet in an experimental stage among us. It is impossible to study the high school without taking into consideration the elementary schools below it and the colleges and universities above it; for in the language of Huxley, "No system of public education is worthy of the name, unless it creates a great educational ladder, with one end in the gutter and the other in the university." The theory is gradually being accepted that the common school has for its ideal the common education of all the people of the nation, common to all from the kindergarten to the university. The ideal system of education is set forth in Huxley's definition, and we cannot, therefore, isolate the high school and consider it alone. It is a part of the general system, and it can be considered only in its relations to the other parts. This is an age for systems and organization. Industry is organized for the sake of economy, and if our educational system were more closely unified in all its parts, economic waste and the loss of energy would be prevented. But the persistence of ideas often forces us to look backward for our educational ideals, to the day when the states were entirely separate communities and when they had not conceived of the idea that they were to become parts of the great republic, threatened with the political evils of uneducated classes. In that age, education was fostered by the churches, and religion was the only force at work in American society that was strong enough to insist on the excellence of a liberal education, and to cherish the love of learning till it grew strong enough to stand alone. The Declaration of Independence broke us loose not only from old political traditions, but also from the domination of colonial educational ideas, and a tendency at once developed toward state systems of schools. The early state constitutions reflect this awakened sentiment, and contain provisions for education, but most of them were meagre and unworthy, as the idea of benevolence still prevailed. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 was the first to make a definite statement on the subject of education in all its phases, raising it to a high plane of political importance. This constitutional injunction imposed

a new duty of government upon Massachusetts, and it is worthy of quotation :

"Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the University at Cambridge, public schools and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public institutions, rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humor, and all social affections, and generous sentiments among the people."

As early as 1647, the Legislature of Massachusetts decreed "that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families as householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the masters thereof being able to instruct youths so far as they may be fitted for the university; and if any town neglect the performance thereof above one year, then every such town shall pay five pounds per annum to the next such school till they shall perform this order." This clause has been the fundamental law for the organization of the system of high schools in the state.* The revised statutes of Massachusetts still provide that every town may, and every town of five hundred inhabitants shall, maintain a high school for ten months in the year, to be kept by a master of competent ability to give instruction in general history, bookkeeping, surveying, geometry, natural philosophy, chemistry, botany and Latin.

In every town containing four thousand inhabitants the teachers of the high school shall, in addition to the branches already named, be competent to give instruction in the Greek and French languages astronomy, geology, rhetoric, logic, intellectual and moral science, and political economy. Two hundred and fifty-five cities and towns, embracing 94.7 per cent of the whole population maintain high schools, and the school committees of districts without high schools

* "Nor was it possible that our society should be satisfied with the democratization of elementary education alone; but the popular instinct demanded an extension of the same principle to secondary education also. The public high school was the answer to this."—Dr. Edmund J. James, in the *Citizen*, September, 1895.

can furnish free tuition and free transportation to adjacent high schools if they deem any pupil sufficiently advanced to profit by that kind of instruction.

The action of the Legislature of Massachusetts in 1894, in making it compulsory for non-high school towns to pay the tuition of children in high schools of adjoining towns has practically made secondary education universal in that state. A marked development of the high school system also exists in Michigan. The early settlers were of hardy New England stock, and they carried with them the characteristics of their fathers in respect to their devotion to higher learning. They entered a new territory and built a state university, and afterward established elementary and secondary schools leading up to it. The graduates of 128 high schools are permitted to enter the university without examination, provided the schools from which they come have been examined and approved by a committee of the faculty. In this manner the university exerts a direct influence on the schools; poor teachers are weeded out, improper text-books are excluded, and uniform courses of study are introduced. In 1881 the Legislature of Minnesota established a high school board for the encouragement of liberal education in the state. Through this board, the law provides for the rendering of pecuniary aid to such schools as shall have regular and orderly courses of study, embracing all the branches prescribed as requisite for admission to the collegiate department of the state university.* A plan similar to this exists in New York, where high schools are accredited and the distribution of funds is made by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.† In

* "Much wiser is the legislation of Minnesota, which established twelve years ago a state high school board, and offered \$400 a year to any high school which was found by the board after competent inspection to fulfill the following conditions: The aided school must receive both sexes free, and non-resident pupils also without fees, provided such pupils can pass examinations in all common-school subjects below algebra and geometry, and must maintain 'regular and orderly courses of study, embracing all the branches prescribed as pre-requisite for admission to the collegiate department of the University of Minnesota not lower than the sub-freshman class.' . . . This high school legislation seems to me the wisest which has been adopted in the United States. It encourages only schools which are already well organized; insists that aided schools shall connect directly with the university; avoids expensive examinations, provides any needed amount of inspection; grades schools by their program and general efficiency, not by individual examination results; gives no pecuniary advantage to a large school over one equally well conducted but smaller; requires aided schools to take non-resident pupils without charge; and applies almost the whole of the state's grant to the direct development of instruction, which is by far the most productive application of any money intended to benefit schools."—Hon. William T. Harris, in Report of Commissioner of Education, 1889-90, Vol. ii, p. 1114.

† "It is unquestionable that the New York State regents' examinations have tended to raise the average standard of instruction in the academies and high

California a plan similar to that of Michigan exists, while for the past five years a steady effort has been put forth in Missouri to articulate the university courses with those of the high schools. The university has submitted preparatory courses which are now required for admission to the freshman class in arts and science, and fifty-four high schools have been accredited. The new states of the northwest are taking the lead in offering liberal provisions for higher education. Arrangements are made in their constitutions for the organization of state universities in which the tuition is usually free, while below, there is an excellent system of high schools, giving ample preparation for the universities. Accordingly, the sections on education in the new constitutions are more liberal than they were in the constitutions of fifty years ago. And yet the United States is the only civilized country in the world without a national educational system having perfect connection between its different grades. Washington, in his messages to Congress and in his farewell address, urged the adoption of such a system; as Charles Pinckney and James Madison had done in the Constitutional Convention, but to no avail. As a result there is no steady progress toward a recognized ideal. The college or university of one section corresponds to the preparatory school of another. There is no definite plan in the organization of high schools, and the higher institutions in general exert too little influence on the grades below. But certain unifying forces are at work, and it is hoped that the time is near at hand when a Minister of Education will sit in the Cabinet at Washington.

That the high school is a legitimate part of the public school system has frequent historical confirmation. It is recognized not only in the published sentiments of educators and statesmen, but also in state constitutions, and national and state appropriations of land and money. Of forty-five state constitutions, more than twenty-two specify high schools as an object of legislative and general interest. An exception to this is found in the Constitution of Georgia. Article

schools, to extend and improve school programs, to bring schools and colleges together by doing away with useless diversities of programs in secondary schools and useless diversities of admission requirements in colleges, and to stimulate some of the communities which maintain these schools to give them better support and to take pride in their standing. These are great services which deserve the respectful attention of the other states of the union and of all persons interested in the creation of an American system of secondary education. The regents have proved that a state examining board can exercise a stimulating, elevating, and unifying influence upon hundreds of institutions of secondary education scattered over a large state, and can wield that power with machinery which, considering the scale of operations, may fairly be called simple and inexpensive."—Hon. William T. Harris, in Report of Commissioner of Education, 1889-90, Vol. ii, p. 1114.

8, section 1, paragraph 1, provides: "There shall be a thorough system of common schools for the education of the children in the elementary branches of an English education only." The objections to the high school are founded on the assumption that public schools are essentially charitable institutions, and that their patrons have no right to demand or expect more than elementary instruction. Another objection is raised that the many are burdened for the few. But this is also true of the courts. Not many people have law suits, but all help to maintain the courts.* The advantages offered by a high school are not simply the privilege of individual instruction, enabling a person to carry away a luxury which profits only him. The state demands an ever increasing number of competent men, and the state should furnish them. In 1848, in Norwich, Conn., it was said when steps were taken to establish a high school: "It's a shame to tax the poor to pay a man \$800 a year for teaching the children to make x's and pothooks and gabble *parley vous*." The question of the legality of the high school has frequently come up for settlement before the law.

In the case of Commonwealth of Massachusetts *vs.* The Town of Dedham, 1817, indictment was found in the lower court against the town for failure to maintain at public expense a grammar school master of good morals and well instructed in the Greek and Latin languages, to instruct children and youth in such languages. The finding was maintained by the Supreme Court, and the principle held that "every inhabitant had the right to participate in both descriptions of schools (higher and lower).† In the case of Cushing *vs.* Newburyport, a suit was brought to restrain the collection of a tax for the support of a high school. It was held that the schools established by the town of Newburyport, Mass., though extending instruction to branches of knowledge beyond those required by law, were yet town schools within the proper meaning of that term, provided for the benefit of all the inhabitants, and that the taxes levied for the support of them were not illegal.‡ The case of Powell *et al.* *vs.* The Board of Education of School District No. 4, St. Clair County, Illinois, 1880, rested upon the right to require the study of German in the public schools, and it was brought by a number of taxpayers against the village board of education, to enjoin what they alleged was a misappropriation of the school funds. The Supreme Court affirmed the judgment of the lower court, holding that there was nothing "to show that the school was not an English school, in which the common

* "Outlines of Economics," R. T. Ely, p. 336.

† Tyng's Reports, Massachusetts, Vol. xvi, p. 141.

‡ Metcalf's Reports, Massachusetts, Vol. x, p. 508.

medium of instruction is the English language," and further, that "the mere fact that the German language is one of the branches of study prescribed, does not change its character as an English school."* The case of *Stewart et al. vs. School District No. 1, Kalamazoo, Mich.*, was brought to restrain the collection of such portions of the school taxes assessed against complainants for the year 1872 as were voted for the support of the high school in that village and for the payment of the salary of the superintendent.

"While nominally this is the end sought," said Judge Cooley in his decision, "the real purpose is wider and vastly more comprehensive, inasmuch as it seeks a judicial determination of the right of the school authorities to levy taxes upon the general public for the support of high schools, and to make free by such taxation, instruction in other languages than the English."

In confirming the decision of the lower court, it was held that "neither in our state policy, in our constitution, nor in our laws do we find the school districts restricted in the branches of knowledge which the officers may cause to be taught, or the grade of instruction that may be given, if the voters consent, in regular form, to bear the expense and raise taxes for the purpose."†

The school system of Pennsylvania presents interesting features. In colonial days the chief work of the Assembly was to create and not to support the schools; for they were maintained both by the Church and private enterprise. The school organized by Benjamin Franklin determined the colonial policy in its developed state—that of creating the school, and assisting private benevolence in its support. This is an important fact for us to consider to-day, for the persistence of this idea of benevolence, modified the educational policy of the state even in the present century, and it was one of the elements that entered into the great conflict of 1834. The constitutional provisions relating to education in the state are very meagre, the Constitution of 1873 containing only the following brief allusion to the subject:

"ARTICLE X.—*Education*.—Section 1. The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public schools wherein all the children of this commonwealth above the age of six years may be educated, and shall appropriate at least one million dollars each year for that purpose.

"Section 2. No money raised for the support of the public schools of the commonwealth shall be appropriated to or used for the support of any sectarian school.

"Section 3. Women twenty-one years of age and upwards shall be

* "Illinois School Report," 1881-82, p. 107.

† "Michigan School Report," 1874, p. 409.

eligible to any office of control or management under the school laws of this state."

The legislation on education in Pennsylvania has been chaotic. Twenty-six colleges have been chartered, with no attempt to insure an approximately uniform value to college degrees. While, under the operations of a recent law establishing a college and university council, future institutions must furnish guarantees of their ability to give a college education, existing institutions are subject to no supervision of control either by this council or the commonwealth. The constitution provides that an efficient system of public schools should be established, and yet there is no state board of education to assist the state superintendent in his duties of inspection. The state grants an annual appropriation of \$5,500,000 to the schools and requires nothing in return; the local boards determine the character of instruction in each community. It will be understood, therefore, how widely the high schools of the state differ from one another.

In the course of an extensive correspondence* with school authorities of the state, it was found that there were many excellent high schools in the state, but that no definite idea existed as to what constitutes the minimum of a high school course. I also found that there was no unification in the system, and every course of study that I received from a high school principal was accompanied by the explanation that "it is not now closely followed," or that "a new one is in contemplation."

Inquiry was made to ascertain what branches are studied in the high schools. Of 145 from which reports were received, thirty have no better claim to be called high schools than the fact that one or more classes in algebra are maintained; in all the others some geometry is taught. In two-thirds of the entire number physics, rhetoric and Latin are studied. Twenty-three report classes in Greek, twenty-nine in German, seven in French. In ninety-nine civics is taught as a separate branch; in nearly all the others it is taught in connection with the history of the United States. Thirty-six report libraries containing 500 volumes and upwards; many report no books and very little apparatus. The courses range from two to four years, and in most cases the work is done by less than three teachers.

I also discovered that smaller high schools had a tendency to imitate the larger ones in their printed courses, so that these are of little value as evidences of actual work, and yet if a high school education is to be regarded as an integral part of a unified system, it ought to

* See "Relation of the High School to the College" (in Pennsylvania), by the writer, published in pamphlet form by the Department of Education, in January, 1894; also *Pennsylvania School Journal*, January, 1894.

have some definite meaning, and imply something like equality of work and attainment. The present condition of the high schools of Pennsylvania is best described in Superintendent Schaeffer's annual report for 1893:

"The high school course in Pennsylvania is like the letter x in algebra—an unknown quantity whose value must, in each case, be found in order to be known. Some cities and boroughs strive, with commendable zeal, to realize the true ideal of a high school, viz: A fitting school for those who wish to enter a higher institution, and a finishing school for those who must begin the struggle for bread. Some high schools neglect preparatory studies, but aim to teach branches which are better taught in the colleges, by reason of superior equipment and endowed professorships; and, at the end of a three or four years' course, their graduates are mortified to find that they cannot enter a respectable college anywhere.

"Other high schools have courses that were evidently arranged by persons not familiar with all grades of school work. Occasionally, one finds a curriculum so ill-fitting and illogical, that it must have been shaped to meet the limited qualifications of some ambitious teacher, whose friends needed a pretext to give him the salary of a high school principal. At no distant day, a conference of representatives of our best colleges and secondary schools should agree upon a minimum high school curriculum, leaving room, of course, for local needs, and future development. The legislature could then follow the example of other states in setting apart a share of the annual appropriation for the purpose of fostering and strengthening the high schools which come up to the proposed standard."

The Committee on Legislation of the Pennsylvania State Teachers' Association proposed two bills, one to make an appropriation of \$200,000 in aid of high schools, and the other providing for the establishment, regulation and classification of high schools, requiring a minimum standard of scholarship on the part of at least one teacher in high schools receiving special aid from the state, but leaving the curriculum of study to be fixed by the local boards.

The bill making an appropriation of \$200,000 in aid of high schools failed, largely by reason of the shrinkage in the annual revenues of the state. The sentiment which is rapidly developing in favor of such an appropriation, causes the friends of high schools to be very sanguine in their hope that the money will come with a revival of national prosperity, probably at the next session of the legislature.

The other bill was passed in an amended form, so as to put the making of the curriculum into the hands of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Township high schools could be established

with state aid, and the high schools already in existence brought to a proper grade. The cramming systems that are found in the country elementary schools, that maintain graduating courses with from twenty to twenty-five subjects, might be abolished with an ample appropriation for township high schools, and the whole system brought into closer relations. Facilities for secondary education should be within the reach of every pupil of the commonwealth, and high schools in the townships are just as necessary as they are in the villages and towns. The establishment of schools ranking above the grammar school, but falling below the true high school, is commendable so far as it indicates a desire to give children higher opportunities, and out of such schools, high schools of satisfactory grade may sometimes issue; but the attempt to give high school instruction in ungraded country schools is a travesty upon sound educational principles, that can only be remedied by the establishment of real high schools.

There is a growing belief on the part of the public in the efficacy of education in two directions:

1. The general training of the members of society for the purpose of life.
2. The special training by systematic instruction of each one for some particular calling.

To reach these ends there must be a system of schools for the training of individuals in a liberal way, and also for a special training necessary for earning a living. This is but following the proposition of Socrates, that wherever there is an art, there must be a science underlying the art, which may be made the basis of an intelligent training in the same. To this end the school curriculum should be varied so as to discover the various forms of ability in the pupils, justifying the introduction of manual training, singing, painting and other so-called "fads." With the rapid multiplication of courses of study and callings, the true function of the high school should be kept in view, for it should not give a bias to or from any one particular calling. The high school is not a professional school, and it is a pedagogical blunder in the training of the high school pupils, to emphasize preparation for a particular vocation at the expense of that general culture and discipline which are calculated to develop the powers and possibilities of the individual.

While it is not contended that the main object of a high school is to fit pupils for college, yet a good high school course should be of such a character that the college would give it recognition, should the pupils desire to go to college. The wisdom of such a liberal policy can not be doubted by any one who has observed the preponderance

of men with high school training in all the walks of civil, professional and industrial life. If a boy of average mind acquires the ideas and instruments of thought furnished by a good high school course, he will all his life be superior to the boy whose educational development is never carried beyond the grammar grade. The student who has mastered the concepts of the sciences has the advantage of the one who gets only a knowledge of the common branches. It is a waste of intellect to keep young people perpetually at work upon the common branches; likewise, the ill adjustment of the various grades of education causes to most pupils a loss of one, two, or more years, and is thus a source of most disastrous extravagance. The high schools that fit pupils for college, are stimulated to do the best work by the college above, while in high schools that do not, the course seldom feels the thrill of such stimulus. There is a widespread feeling that the popular course makes lighter demands upon the pupils, than that which prepares for college; that the teachers are not so well qualified, and this feeling has not closed the breach between the college and the high school, and reduced the difficulty of giving instruction to non-college pupils with the thoroughness that they are entitled to receive. When a good general course of four years, adapted to popular demands, is also accepted as a satisfactory preparatory course by the colleges, it will then be feasible to give a good minimum definition of the statutory high school that will provide for the needs and aspirations of the people. This definition must include the following elements:

1. Provision for a good liberal training in recognized secondary subjects, and by approved methods, for those pupils who end their schooling with the high school.
2. Preparation of pupils for the normal schools.
3. Preparation of pupils for high technical schools, as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stevens' Institute, Troy Polytechnic, etc.
4. Preparation of pupils for college. This will become generally feasible if the colleges finally accept, as now seems probable, a good four years' course as a suitable preparatory course.
5. A course of study at least four years in length.
6. An adequate teaching force and an adequate equipment for the accomplishment of the foregoing aims. No high school should be regarded as worthy of the name, no community should tolerate such a high school, that does not meet at least the first four requirements.

Schools like the following should not be treated as high schools in any sense of the word :

1. A grammar school in which a few high school branches are taught.

2. A so-called high school that in its first and second years is strictly a grammar school.

3. A so-called high school in which the students select such studies as they please, without following a carefully thought out plan.

4. Any high school that falls short of fulfilling the mission of a high school as already defined.

To accomplish these results it will be necessary to make provision for a thorough organization and supervision of public education by the state. Much energy has been wasted in the past by poor methods and imperfect organization. The work of the future will be to so utilize all the forces that the masses may receive the full benefit of the system. The functions of the state do not end with the support of elementary schools, but as it is of economic value to the country to explore every part of the domain and work every mine, so as to make it a part of the nation's wealth, so in education every field should be explored in order to develop each mute, inglorious Milton.

In those states where the entire general control of public education depends upon the state superintendent the system is too much loaded down at this point. A state board of education is thus a necessary department of supervision. These boards in Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota have added much to the efficiency of the schools by adopting uniform courses of study, by personal inspection and by frequent reports; while in New York the Board of Regents is making an effort to unify secondary education and assume control of all the various agencies of higher education in the state. This is the state's ideal, and legislators and educators should strive to make provision for every child for access to every grade of education, from the most elementary to the most comprehensive. The various stages of the system should bear a harmonious relation to each other, and then in the language of Dr. Edward Everett Hale, "If a boy understands that he may pass through the public schools to the university; when you can inculcate that feeling in the primary scholar from the slums; when you can make the people understand that the university is as much a part of their education as the primary or grammar school, we shall be nearing the ideal."*

LEWIS R. HARLEY.

North Wales, Pa.

COURSES IN POLITICS AND JOURNALISM AT LILLE.

It is perhaps not generally known that within a comparatively recent time there has been established a so-called *Section des Sciences Sociales et Politiques* in connection with the Faculty of Law in the

* From address by Dr. Hale on "The University Ideal in America," at the University Club, Philadelphia, July, 1893.